

Claims:

1. A tape printer for use with a tape cassette and an ink ribbon cassette, said printer comprising a housing and a printhead having a line of printing elements thereon, wherein said printer comprises at least one cassette receiving portion in said housing for receiving the tape cassette and the ink ribbon cassette, such that the cassettes are receivable in a direction which is substantially perpendicular to the line of printing elements on the printhead when the printhead is in a printing position.
2. A tape printer according to claim 1, wherein there are two cassette receiving portions in the housing, a first cassette receiving portion for receiving a tape cassette and a second cassette receiving portion for receiving an ink ribbon cassette.
3. A tape printer according to claim 2, wherein said print head is movable between a non-printing position and a printing position.
4. A tape printer according to claim 3, wherein the housing comprises two parts, one of the parts being movable relative to the other.
5. A tape printer according to claim 4, wherein said print head is mounted on said movable part.
6. A tape printer according to claim 5, wherein said movable part is rotatable relative to said other part between a first position and a second position, said movable part being in a printing position in said first position and in a non-printing position in said second position.
7. A tape printer according to any one of claims 4 to 6, wherein said movable part comprises the second cassette receiving portion and said other part comprises said first cassette receiving portion.
8. A tape printer according to any one of claims 4 to 6, wherein the tape printer further comprises a cassette holder, said cassette holder comprising the second cassette receiving portion and being movable between a first closed position and a

second open position, said cassette holder being arranged to receive an ink ribbon cassette when said holder is in said second position.

9. A tape printer according to claim 8, wherein said cassette holder is arranged to move from said first position to said second position when said movable part is opened and said cassette receiving portion is arranged to move from said second position to said first position when said movable part is closed.

10. A tape printer according to claim 9, wherein said movable part is rotatable through a first angle and said cassette holder is rotatable through a second angle between the first and second positions, said first angle being greater than said second angle.

11. A tape printer according to claim 10, wherein said movable part and said cassette holder are mounted to said other part on a common axis.

12. A tape printer according to any one of claims 8 to 11, wherein said cassette holder comprises an upper wall and a lower wall between which an ink ribbon cassette is receivable.

13. A tape printer according to claim 12, wherein the cassette holder further comprises two side wall portions on one side of said holder disposed between the upper and lower walls, a gap being provided between said two wall portions.

14. A tape printer according to claim 12 or 13, wherein guide members are provided on at least one of the upper and lower walls.

15. A tape printer according to any one of claims 4 to 14, wherein said movable part comprises an upper wall, a lower wall and a first and second cavity with a printhead mounting portion therebetween on which the printhead is mounted.

16. A tape printer substantially as described herein with reference to Figures 1 to 23 of the accompanying drawings.

17. A tape printing system comprising a tape printer according to any preceding claim in combination with a tape cassette housing a supply of tape and an ink ribbon cassette housing a supply of ink ribbon.

18. A tape printing system according to claim 17, wherein the ink ribbon cassette comprises a body having an ink ribbon supply portion housing an ink ribbon supply spool, an ink ribbon take-up portion housing an ink ribbon take-up spool, and wherein an opening is provided between the ink ribbon supply portion and the ink ribbon take-up portion which passes over the entire width of the cassette body from a rear side to a front side in a direction perpendicular to axes of rotation of said spools, with ink ribbon passing from said ink ribbon supply portion to said ink ribbon take-up portion across said opening, said ink ribbon cassette further comprising a gear coupled to said ink-ribbon take-up spool at an upper or a lower portion thereof for coupling with a drive gear in the tape printer.

19. A tape printing system according to claim 17 or claim 18, wherein the tape cassette comprises a body housing a tape supply spool and a platen mounted in an opening of said body for cooperation with said print head in use.

20. A printing system substantially as described herein with reference to Figures 1 to 23 of the accompanying drawings.

21. An ink ribbon cassette for a tape printer, said cassette comprising a body having an ink ribbon supply portion housing an ink ribbon supply spool, an ink ribbon take-up portion housing an ink ribbon take up spool, and a member connecting said two portions, wherein an opening is provided in the body between the ink ribbon supply portion and the ink ribbon take up portion which extends over the entire width of the cassette body from a rear side to a front side in a direction perpendicular to axes of rotation of said spools, with ink ribbon passing from said ink ribbon supply portion to said ink ribbon take-up portion across said opening, said ink ribbon cassette further comprising a gear coupled to said ink-ribbon take-up spool at an upper or a lower portion thereof for coupling with a drive gear in a tape printer.

22. An ink ribbon cassette substantially as described herein with reference to Figures 1 to 23 of the accompanying drawings.

23. A method of loading a tape cassette and an ink ribbon cassette into a tape printer, said tape printer comprising a printhead having a line of printing elements thereon, said method comprising the step of inserting said tape cassette and said ink ribbon cassette into said tape printer in a direction which is substantially perpendicular to the line of printing elements on the printhead when the printhead is in a printing position.

24. A method of loading substantially as described herein with reference to Figures 1 to 23 of the accompanying drawings.

25. A tape cassette for a tape printer, the tape cassette comprising a body having a base, a top, and sides extending from the base to the top, the body housing a roll of print receiving medium having an axis of rotation extending in a first direction, the body having a guide member on each of two opposing sides extending along said sides in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction for guiding the tape cassette into a tape printer in the second direction and locating the tape cassette in the tape printer.

26. A tape cassette according to claim 25, further comprising a supply spool extending in the first direction, the roll of print receiving medium being mounted on the supply spool.

27. A tape cassette according to claim 25 or 26, further comprising a platen extending in the first direction and mounted in an opening of the body for cooperation with a print head of a tape printer in use.

28. A tape cassette according to claim 25 or 26, wherein each guide member comprises a first elongate member disposed in a plane perpendicular to the opposing sides and a second elongate member disposed in a plane parallel to the opposing sides.